

## REMARKS

By the foregoing Amendment, Claims 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 22, 23, and 25-27 have been currently amended, and Claim 5 has been cancelled. Claims 13 and 18-21 have been withdrawn from consideration. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6, 8-12, 15 and 22-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) on the grounds of anticipation by Buffa (GB 2104952), disclosing a buckle for safety belts, and making no specific reference whatsoever to a provision or suitability for use in a harness. Claim 5 has been cancelled, and the subject matter of Claim 5 has been incorporated in Claim 1. Claim 1 also has been amended to recite a plurality of locking apertures, instead of locking apertures or recesses. Buffa discloses a plurality of locking recesses 11c provided in the end of the locking tongue 11b, but fails to teach, disclose or suggest replacing the locking recesses with locking apertures.

Claim 1 now also recites "each said locking aperture defines a respective peripheral seat, and the rounded or tapered locking part of each said locking member is sized to engage a respective said seat when urged into said respective locking aperture but not to pass completely through said seat." This feature helps to ensure that the arrangement of the invention allows proper release under load. The provision of peripheral seats within locking apertures provides a secure connection when the arrangement is locked, but prevents any snagging on the locking members as the arrangement is released, thereby providing a reliable emergency release arrangement. It

is respectfully submitted that Buffa fails to teach, disclose or suggest providing locking apertures each defining a respective peripheral seat, and the rounded or tapered locking part of each locking member being sized to engage a respective seat when urged into the respective locking aperture, but not to pass completely through the seat, and it is further noted that Buffa does not require release upon subjection to a load, and that seat belt buckles as in Buffa are generally intended only to release when no load is applied. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 1-4, 6, 8-12, 15 and 22-25 are novel and inventive over Buffa, and that the rejection pertaining to Claims 1-4, 6, 8-12, 15 and 22-25 on the grounds of anticipation by Buffa should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-12, 22, 23 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) on the grounds of anticipation by Schmidt, disclosing a remotely releasable safety belt buckle with balls 10 received in depressions 9 in a locking position. Claim 5 has been cancelled. It is respectfully submitted that Schmidt fails to teach, disclose or suggest providing locking apertures each defining a respective peripheral seat, and the rounded or tapered locking part of each locking member being sized to engage a respective seat when urged into the respective locking aperture, but not to pass completely through the seat. Schmidt also does not require release upon subjection to a load, and seat belt buckles as in Schmidt are generally intended only to release when no load is applied. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 1-4, 6-12, 22, 23 and 28 are novel and inventive over Schmidt, and that the rejection pertaining to Claims 1-4, 6-12, 22, 23 and 28 on the grounds of anticipation by Schmidt should be withdrawn.

Claims 26 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Buffa. Claims 26 and 27 depend from Claim 1, and it is respectfully submitted that Buffa fails to teach, disclose or suggest providing locking apertures each defining a respective peripheral seat, and the rounded or tapered locking part of each locking member being sized to engage a respective seat when urged into the respective locking aperture, but not to pass completely through the seat, as is claimed. It is respectfully submitted that Claims 26 and 27 are novel and inventive over Buffa, and that the rejection of Claims 26 and 27 on the grounds of obviousness from Buffa should be withdrawn.

Claims 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Schmidt in view of Heidman, Jr., which was cited as disclosing a pushed locking element having a loop thereon acting as a button. Claims 15-17 depend from Claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that Schmidt and Heidman, Jr. do not teach, disclose or suggest providing locking apertures each defining a respective peripheral seat, and the rounded or tapered locking part of each locking member being sized to engage a respective seat when urged into the respective locking aperture, but not to pass completely through the seat, as is claimed. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 15-17 are novel and inventive over Schmidt and Heidman, Jr., either taken individually or in combination, and that the rejection of Claims 15-17 on the grounds of obviousness from Schmidt in view of Heidman, Jr. should be withdrawn.

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Buffa in view of Thomas, which was cited as teaching a releasable hook forming a


recess. Claim 14 depends from Claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that Buffa and Thomas do not teach, disclose or suggest providing locking apertures each defining a respective peripheral seat, and the rounded or tapered locking part of each locking member being sized to engage a respective seat when urged into the respective locking aperture, but not to pass completely through the seat, as is claimed. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claim 14 is novel and inventive over Buffa and Thomas, either taken individually or in combination, and that the rejection of Claim 14 on the grounds of obviousness from Buffa in view of Thomas should be withdrawn.

Applicant has reviewed the additional prior art made of record and not relied upon, and it is believed that the additional prior art made of record and not relied upon is no more pertinent than the references actually applied.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the Claim 1-4, 6-12, 14-17 and 22-28 should now be allowable, and favorable reconsideration of the application, including consideration on the merits of Claims 13 and 18-21, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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